WORLDVIEW International affairs, distant lands

Career Diplomat

Terence Todman is one of our most senior and respected ambassadors.

BY BONNIE SUBRAMANIAN

WHEN TERence Todman was informed of his nomination as ambassador to South Africa in 1986, he responded in a way few career diplomats would have. He turned down the appointment because he disagreed with the government's policy in South Africa.

But even in his refusal, Todman, one of the most senior diplomats in the foreign service, demonstrated a balance and restraint that characterize his approach to diplomacy.

"The United States cannot afford to be out of South Africa. You have to be there to maintain a dialogue," said Todman in a press conference, admitting that he would be more than willing to accept the job if the administration could work out a policy that was acceptable to both blacks and whites in strife-torn South Africa.

By selecting Todman, the highest ranking black diplomat, the administration hoped to make a symbolic protest against apartheid at a time when race riots in South Africa dominated world headlines. When an earlier nomination for the post fell through, because the candidate lacked impeccable credentials, Richard Lugar, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, suggested that the post demanded someone of "the caliber of Terence Todman."

Todman has established his credentials both in the State Department and in the countries where he has served. As ambassador to Spain he negotiated a treaty renewal for U.S.-Spanish military bases which paved the way for Spain's entry into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In Guinea he succeeded in persuading the left-leaning President Sekou Toure to take a less hostile view of the United States, and he played a key role in the negotiations that led to the signing of the Panama Canal Treaty during the Carter administration.

When Todman has been faulted it has been for being too conciliatory. As assistant secretary of state for Latin America, he was criticized by human rights activists in the Carter administration for not being tough on right-wing dictators in the Western Hemisphere. He was removed from the post, but First Lady Rosalyn Carter, a close personal friend, defended his "balanced approach" to human rights.

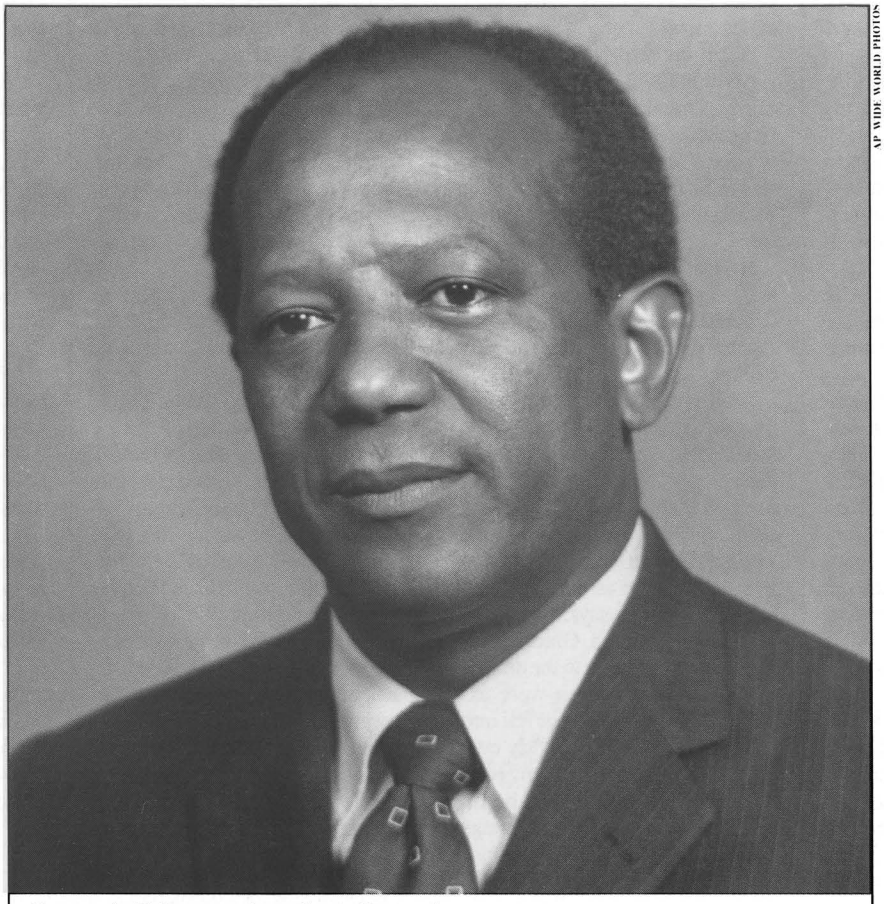
TODMAN IS CURRENTLY ambassador to Denmark, a country that is a member of NATO and a key trade partner. The United States embassy in Copenhagen coordinates the activities of NATO and other agencies that relate to defense, east-west relations, and trade. "It is a major management job to ensure that there is only one clear voice representing the United States," says Todman of his current position in Denmark.

A firm believer in dialogue, Todman is currently perfecting his command of the Danish language, which he picked up by taking classes in his spare time, and from radio and television. "By learning a language, you learn a perspective," he says. "You can also make a better presentation in defense of the U.S. point of view." He is also quite fluent in French, Spanish, Arabic, and Hindi.

But Todman stresses that learning a foreign language may not always be the solution. "A diplomat must have the ability to communicate, which is one of the reasons why I tell young people that knowledge of their own language is very important," he explains.

Todman believes that the need to communicate has become imperative in an increasingly complex world. With the emergence of other global powers, he feels the United States has begun to adopt a more flexible approach in its dealings with other countries. "We understand we have to engage in dialogue. We can't just tell people what to do," he says, referring to the decades immediately after World War II when the United States was the preeminent power in the world.

From his experience, however, he feels that the manner in which the American point of view is



AP WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

Terence A. Todman, ambassador to Denmark

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presented should vary from country to country. "Sometimes you have to spell it out very clearly and at other times you have to be subtle," he says, maintaining that the consistency in the content of the policy must never be lost.

But when a diplomat does see the need for a change in policy as Todman did in South Africa, his position can become awkward. Explaining his perspective in such a situation, Todman says, "What an ambassador is able to do depends on how the policy of his government is perceived," adding candidly, "I am not sure the government's policy is believed by people in South Africa."

Todman believes that honesty is an essential part of the job and that "a diplomat should have the courage to tell both sides about things the way he sees them."

TERENCE A. TODMAN was born in 1926 in St. Thomas, the Virgin Islands. He served as an officer in the United States Army in Japan and as assistant personnel officer of the government of the Virgin Islands. He then went on to obtain a bachelor's degree from Inter-American University, in San German, Puerto Rico, where he graduated *summa cum laude*. He enrolled in SU's Maxwell School of Citizenship with the intention of pursuing a career in the foreign service. He graduated in 1952 with a master's degree in public administration.

At the oral examination Todman took for his entry into the diplomatic corps, one of the interviewers felt that his accent was not American enough for a prospective United States diplomat. Todman, who had given up other lucrative job opportunities to join the foreign service, was initially dismayed. But he found that the Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, where he was assigned, did not have serious objections to his Carribean accent, and thus a long string of diplomatic appointments began.

After an initial stint at the State Department, Todman was assigned as an advisor to U.S. delegations to the United Nations General Assembly and Trusteeship Council. He also served as the United States Representative on the Petitions and Rural Economic Development Committees of the Trusteeship Council.

Following that, he was assigned in various roles to embassies in New Delhi, Tunis, and Tongo. He returned to Washington in 1968 as country director for Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and the Seychelle Islands, in the Bureau of African Affairs.

Todman's first posting as ambassador was to the African Republic of Chad, after which he served for four years as the ambassador to Guinea. Todman looks back at his assignment in Guinea as one of the most rewarding of his career and one in which he was able to effect a change in the ruling government's attitude towards the United States.

At the time he was posted to Guinea, anti-American sentiment was high. President Sekou Toure had asked the United States for help when Guinea became independent from France in 1952 and had not received an encouraging response. The Soviet Union came to his rescue; as a result Toure became a rabid critic of the United States. But by establishing an open line of communication with Toure, Todman contributed to building a more positive image of the United States.

After serving in Guinea, Todman worked actively to be posted to a non-African country. He was assigned to Costa Rica in 1975, the first black ambassador to a Latin American country.

Later Todman returned to the State Department as assistant secretary of state for Latin America. During this time he played a key role in the negotiations that led to the signing of the Panama Canal Treaty, which paved the way for Panamanian control of the canal at the end of this century. He also initiated a dialogue with Cuba and negotiated an agreement that led to the establishment of a physical presence in that country. With experience in African and Latin American affairs behind him, Todman was next assigned to Spain.

The five years that Todman served there were crucial in Spain's history. The country was in a state of flux following the death of its right-wing dictator, General Franco. In 1982, Spain swung to the opposite end of the political spectrum when a socialist government was elected. Despite the tilt to the left, Todman was able to negotiate for a renewal of American bases, which later led to Spain's entry into NATO.

TODMAN HAS BEEN recognized at home and abroad as an outstanding diplomat. He was recently awarded the President's Distinguished Service Award, and the government of the Virgin Islands presented him with its Medal of Honor.

He has been decorated by the government of Chad and the Spanish government awarded him the Grand Cross of the Highest Order of Isabela la Catolica. Todman has received honorary doctorates from Syracuse University and Colgate University.

While widely recognized for his deep dedication to his profession, Todman admits that he shies away from the sort of lifestyle that accompanies a career in the foreign service. Reflecting on the adage that a diplomat's life is made up of large doses of protocol, Geritol and alcohol, the 62-year-old ambassador professes a scrupulous adherence to protocol but not to the other two. Terence Todman finds his work stimulating enough.

Also in the Corps

Arnold Raphel's mother remembers him at the age of ten, drawing maps and writing about the political situation in the Middle East. The United States ambassador to Pakistan is not sure he can corroborate that, but if his experience in the foreign service is any indication it would appear plausible.

The 43-year-old diplomat on his first ambassadorial assignment has been involved with the Middle East and South Asia for the major part of his career in the foreign service.

Raphel's appointment in 1987 came at a time when crucial changes were taking place in the delicate balance of power in the region. Ever since Soviet troops entered Afghanistan in 1980, the region has been a theater for superpower politics. The United States has supported a guerilla resistance movement in Afghanistan through neighboring Pakistan. But recently the Soviet Union has agreed to withdraw its military presence, and the new developments are likely to affect future U.S. foreign policy in the region. Proximity to countries like China, India, and Iran also make the diplomatic mission in Pakistan a strategically important one.

Raphel has been closely involved with the dramatic political developments that have occurred in the region over the past decade. He was one of the four diplomats who traveled to Algeria in 1980 during the final weeks of the hostage crisis in Iran to negotiate for the release of the American hostages.

Raphel was born in Troy, New York. He completed his undergraduate education at Hamilton College and went on to pursue a master's degree at SU's Maxwell School. He joined the State Department in 1967 and was first assigned to the city of Isfahan in Iran and later to the capital, Teheran. At the Teheran embassy he served as a staff aide to the ambassador and then as Political Officer.

He returned to Washington in 1978 to join the policy planning staff in charge of North America, Iran, and the Persian Gulf. Soon after, he was made special assistant to the secretary of state, during which time he was involved in the negotiations for the return of the hostages in Iran. Over a period of two years he worked with secretaries of state Cyrus Vance, Edmund Muskie, and Alexander Haig. Raphel was next assigned to the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs and then to the Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Desk, where he served until the Senate confirmed his nomination as ambassador early in 1987. ***—B.S.***